

BUILDING PERCEIVED QUALITY IN THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL SELLING ON PURCHASE DECISION

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: March 2023 Revised: March 2023 Approved: March 2023	Background: Personal selling is direct communication between payees and potential representatives that leads to profitable deals, customer satisfaction, and human relationships. Meanwhile, perceived quality is a consumer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service in relation to consumer decisions, and purchasing decisions are individual activities that are directly related to purchasing decisions for products or services offered by sellers. Aim: This study aims to analyze the influence of personal selling on purchasing decisions due to consumer perceptions of the quality of Tupperware products in Jayapura Regency. Method: This research is a quantitative research involving 184 customers. The data were analyzed by path analysis using the AMOS Structural Equation Model (SEM) program. Findings: The results showed that personal selling had a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions ($cr = 2.709$; $p = 0.007$), personal selling had a positive and significant effect on perceived quality ($cr = 2.278$; $p = 0.023$:), perceived quality had a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions ($cr = 1.784$; $p = 0.044$) and personal selling had a positive and significant indirectly effect on purchasing decisions through perceived quality ($cr = 3.294$; $p = 0.003$).
KEYWORDS	<i>personal selling, perceived quality, purchasing decisions and structural equation model (SEM)</i>
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INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization, manufacturers must compete for market position. Manufacturers must also be able to maintain an inventory of their products in order to continue to compete with other products in the market. In this increasingly fierce competition, consumers are relatively easier to switch to competing companies because consumers are smarter in their purchasing decisions and because consumers buy good quality products at competitive prices. Product quality is an important competitive factor. In the development of a company, the issue of product quality also determines the rapid development of the company (Ali et al., 2021). Product quality is the ability of a product to produce results or performance that meet or exceed consumer desires (Dhameria et al., 2021; Thoumrungroje & Racela, 2013). According to Kotler and Keller (2016), product quality is a general characteristic of a product that affects its ability to meet stated or perceived needs.

Factors that can influence consumer purchases include social factors, cultural factors, personal factors, and psychological factors (Qazzafi, 2020; Ramya & Ali, 2016). Mental factors influenced by motivation and perception. In this case, the psychological factor that influences the purchase is perception (Tan & Goh, 2018). Perception is a subjective assessment or

personal reaction to a chosen object (Moeller et al., 2020). Consumer perception of the product is taken into account when choosing the product to buy (Malik, 2014).

Consumer perception of brand quality is also referred to as perceived quality (Severi & Ling, 2013). This perceived quality shapes the perception of product quality in the eyes of customers. The perceived quality of a product or service brand can determine the value of a product or service and directly influence consumer purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. This is in accordance with the research of Ariadi et al. (2019) where quality perception can increase the level of purchasing decisions and brand loyalty to products.

Product quality has eight dimensions and one of them is the impression or perceived quality resulting from the use of indirect measurements, because it is likely that consumers do not understand the product or do not have information about the product (Akoglu & Özbek, 2022; Ryu & Ko, 2020). Quality perception is a consumer's perception of the quality or superiority of a product or service in relation to what consumers expect (Asshidin et al., 2016; Uzir et al., 2021). Quality perception directly influences purchasing decisions and brand loyalty, which is confirmed by research findings that consumer perception of the quality of a product affects consumption and purchasing habits of products (Kusumawati & Rahayu, 2020; Marakanon & Panjakajornsak, 2017).

Basically, brand perception is closely related to product quality and naturally affects consumer behavior, so the brand is one of the most important considerations for consumers before making a purchase decision. Meeting their needs and wants, consumer perceptions tend to buy brands for products they like or that they are familiar with. In recent times, the domestic sector has had many industries. The need for household appliances is quite high making household appliances very promising, the household appliances industry, especially the plastic industry, is a fairly developed business.

The perception of a product or brand basically grows in the minds of consumers to stimuli/information that can add value or quality to the brand/product, where these efforts can be done through sales promotion. One of the dimensions of advertising that is widely used in market orientation is personal selling. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), personal selling is the oral presentation of a company by a sales representative to one or more potential buyers with the aim of selling the goods or services offered.

Tupperware is a plastic product that is common in household appliances and certainly exists in the daily activities of every community. That is why it is in great demand especially among women, as it meets the needs of each consumer. However, beyond that, of course, consumers must know that the product has value in terms of material quality, price and company background, so the company will definitely try to stand out. In the implementation of promotional activities, they use lists that can be consulted directly by potential customers. In addition to this method, Tupperware also organizes parties. This form of sales strategy called Tupperware party is a door to door demo of Tupperware products initiated by those who have officially become Tupperware partners. However, the forms of sales promotion applied based on the findings are still not effective in improving purchasing decisions, because potential customers are basically only interested in the mechanism of offers and the lifestyle of merchants, not in excellence and also product quality.

Competition for household plastic products has recently been very tight and many new brands have emerged that compete for the superiority of their products in terms of shape, color

and durability. The following is a table of plastic packaging in the Top Brand Awards 2020-2021.

Table 1. Top Brand Index Plastic Container Year 2020-2022

No.	Brand	Year		
		2020	2021	2022
1.	Lion Star	36.7%	33.7%	31.9%
2.	Tupperware	33.6%	32.7%	25.0%
3.	Lock & Lock	7.0%	11.0%	12.8%
4.	Claris	5.0%	6.6%	6.9%
5.	Maspion	3.6%	2.4%	2.3%

Source: (Top Brand Award, 2022)

From the data mentioned above, it can be seen that the top brand plastic container brand Tupperware occupies the second position under Lion Star Products. In 2020, the percentage of Tupperware's top brand awards reached 33.6%. However, in 2021 and 2022, the existence of the Tupperware brand continued to decline until it reached 25%. The decline in the percentage of Tupperware brands is certainly caused by the many appearances of the same products with different brands, especially Lion Star products which are now at the top of the top brand index. So that with the increasing number of competitors that appear it turns out to result in a decrease in the percentage of the Tupperware brand. The main competitor of this Tupperware product when viewed from the data is the Lion Star product.

The table shows that the Lion Star brand and other brands do not always experience significant improvements like other brands. Of course, this is due to the growing public impression of the dangers of using plastic food packaging. The use of plastic in food packaging can cause various diseases such as liver cancer and kidney disease, thus reducing public interest in shopping.

Based on existing observations and the fact that Tupperware brand plastic containers are widely used by all circles of society, students, workers, etc. This is reflected in the large number of loyal customers/members who are not only consumers but also retailers when promoting these Tupperware products. However, based on these findings, information was obtained that sometimes potential consumers are initially interested in the Tupperware product because the brand and trends or people's lifestyle dominate the product compared to other products without suspecting the quality of the product. In addition, this research points to the problem of contradictions or theoretical gaps in research results on personal selling which is one of the promotional methods that are widely used in companies in their orientation towards creating consumer purchasing decisions.

This study aims to test and analyze the influence of personal selling on purchasing decisions, test and analyze the influence of personal selling on perceived quality, test and analyze the influence of perceived quality on purchasing decisions, and test and analyze and provide empirical evidence on the influence of personal selling either directly or indirectly through perceived quality of purchasing decisions.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is explanatory research which explains causal relationships between variables through hypothesis testing using the same data with a quantitative approach. The research objects chosen were customers or members of Tupperware products in the Jayapura Regency area. The population and sample in this study were 184 consumers. The data were collected through questionnaires then analyzed by path analysis using the AMOS Structural Equation Model (SEM) program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of testing on personal selling, perceived quality and decision variables seen from validity, reality, and some classic assumption tests consisting of normality tests and outlier tests can be seen in table 2. Where the test results are seen that the validity test value (pearson correlation) ($r > 3.0$) and at the AVE value average variance extracted > 5.0). Expect a reliability test value (Cronbach alpha > 0.6) and a CR (Construct Realibility value > 0.70). Then judging from the normality test seen from the cr value (curtosis < 2.58) and seen from the univariate outlier test, the Z-score value < 3.0 .

Table 2. Test Results of Validity, Reality, Normality, and Outlier

Variable	Validity (Pearson)	AVE	Realibilitas (Cronbach- Alpha)	CR	cr	Z- score (max)
Personal Selling (X)						
Approach (X.1)	0.868	0.758	0.840	0.884	- 0.401	1.70355
Presentation (X.2)	0.906		0.834		- 0.106	1.79484
Overcoming Objections (X.3)	0.928		0.834		- 0.169	1.84975
Close a sale (X.4)	0.924		0.833		- 0.471	1.86038
Follow-up & Maintenance (X.5)	0.830		0.842		0.016	1.90583
Perceived Quality (Z)						
Reason to Buy (Z.1)	0.722	0.762	0.858	0.941	-0.039	1.66490
Distribution/Position (Z.2)	0.709		0.859		-0.088	1.80459
Optimum Price(Z.3)	0.716		0.873		1.129	1.89268
Distribution Channel (Z.4)	0.743		0.868		-0.648	1.77119
Brand Expansion (Z.5)	0.737		0.863		-0.435	1.69342
Purchase Decision (Y)						
Problem needs recognition (Y.1)	0.862	0.7	0.785	0.921	0.128	1.77625
Information search (Y.2)	0.87		0.786		-0.19	1.66938
Alternative evaluation (Y.3)	0.868		0.788		-0.272	1.76287
Purchase decision (Y.4)	0.87		0.783		0.38	1.67585

Post-purchase behavior (Y.5)	0.888	0.782	-0.253	1.67454
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Full Structural Construct Confirmatory Model Analysis

Data analysis using quantitative methods in this study uses structural equation modeling (SEM) with the help of program AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structural) version 21.0. The predictive power of observational variables both at the indicator level and at the construct level is seen through the critical ratio (c.r). If the critical ratio shows significant then indicators can be said to be useful for predicting latent constructs or variables. The latent variables in this study are personal selling, perceived quality and purchasing decisions. By using the structural equation model with the help of the Amos program will be obtained indicators of a fit model.

The fit model structure is said to be good if the chi-square value is small and insignificant at $\alpha = 0.05$; the probability value ≥ 0.05 ; CMI/DF ≤ 2.00 ; GFI, AGFI, TLI, and CFI NFI ≥ 0.90 ; and RMSEA ≤ 0.80 . The results of the confirmatory factor analysis show a fit model. It can be seen in Table 3 below.

Tabel 3. Goodnees of Fit Indices Overall of Research Model

Goodness of Fit Indexes	Cup-of Value	Model Results	Information
Chi Square (X^2)	Expected small	89,808	Good
Sign. Probability	$\geq 0,05$	0,397	Good
CMIN/DF	$\leq 2,00$	1,032	Good
GFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,941	Good
AGFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,919	Good
TLI	$\geq 0,90$	0,998	Good
CFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,998	Good
RMSEA	$\leq 0,08$	0,013	Good

The results of hypothesis testing (table 4) with a structural equation model (figure 2) and using AMOS V.21 Software show that personal selling has a positive and significant relationship to purchasing decisions, because the p-value is 0.007 ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) and has a relative large value of 0.218. Personal selling has a positive and significant relationship to perceived quality, because the p-value is 0.023 ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) and has a relatively large value of 0.184. Perceived quality has a positive and significant relationship to purchasing decisions, because the p-value is 0.044 ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) and has a relatively large value of 0.146. Personal selling has an indirect relationship with purchase decisions with a relative large value of 0.027. From the results of the sobel test, it was also found that perceived quality was able to mediate the indirect relationship between personal selling and purchasing decisions significantly with a CR value of 3.294 ($Z > 1.96$).

Table 4. Results of Testing the Influence Between Constructs of Research Variables

Variable Correlation	Standarized Estimate	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	C. R	P-value
X $\rightarrow$ Y	0.218	0.182	-	2.709	0,007

X → Z	0.184	0.176	-	2.278	0,023
Z → Y	0.146	0.128	-	1.784	0,044
X → Z → Y	-	-	0.027	3,294	0.003

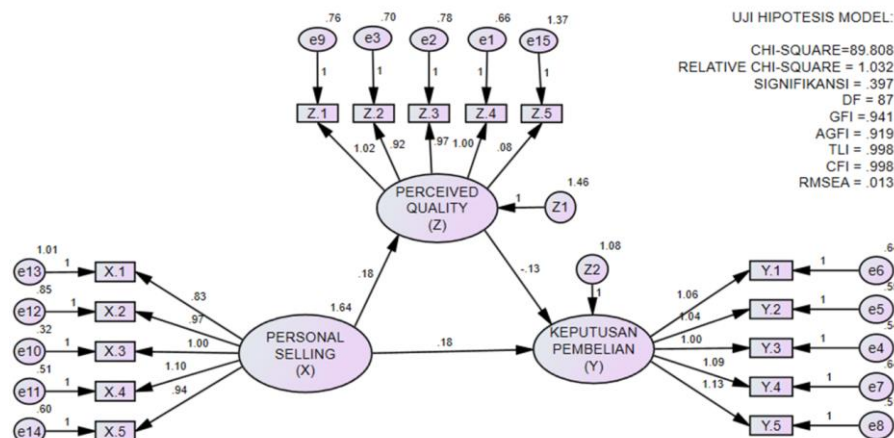


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model

The Influence of Personal Selling on Purchasing Decisions

The results showed that personal selling significantly positively affects purchasing decisions, this means that the potential for purchasing decisions on products from the company will be high, if personal selling carried out by the company is made more attractive.

Personal selling if it increases in terms of the agent's ability to approach before starting the presentation and direct the action to buy, make an interesting presentation and follow up, then it will cause interest in finding further and more detailed information on potential customers, until finally it raises the desire to consider buying and the intention to try and a sense of belonging to the product or service, This is because personal selling can direct one's actions to buy a product well.

The Effect of Personal Selling on Perceived Quality

The results showed that if the personal selling activities of a company are getting better, then the potential perceived quality of the community towards the company will also increase.

These results prove that if the increase in personal selling will directly increase the perceived quality of potential customers. Personal selling is the ability of a good agent to approach before starting a presentation and make a presentation that attracts attention, because the brand will become a brand that is increasingly known, and easier to remember, when personal selling is done well and gets good attention from potential customers.

The Effect of Perceived Quality on Purchasing Decisions

The results showed that perceived quality significantly positively affects purchasing decisions, which means that the higher the perceived quality that consumers have to a particular company, the higher consumer purchasing decisions at that company will also be.

Perceived quality if it increases, it will directly increase purchasing decisions in potential customers, it is because if potential customers already know and remember the brand very well,

then potential consumers will tend to be interested in finding information about the brand in more detail and consider buying the brand. When it comes time for potential customers to decide to have a brand, then the brand will be the first to be remembered.

The Influence of Personal Selling on Purchasing Decisions Through Perceived Quality

The results showed that perceived quality is also significantly able to mediate the relationship between personal selling and purchasing decisions, indicating that overall, personal selling accompanied by perceived quality will influence and determine consumer purchasing decisions. Similarly, if the community already has perceived quality to a company coupled with the help of personal selling carried out by the company, it will make the possibility of consumer purchasing decisions will be higher.

Personal selling that has been assessed in terms of attractiveness, the ability of agents in presentations, and follow-ups carried out, will be better able to make purchasing decisions if potential customers already have perceived quality about the brand. This is because with the brand is a well-known brand, the brand is classified as a brand category that is easy to remember, and the brand has been at the top of mind of potential consumers, it will directly encourage the emergence of purchasing decisions in these potential consumers.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that personal selling carried out by Tupperware company agents can improve purchasing decisions and people's perceived quality of Tupperware products. Then with the level of perceived quality in the public of high Tupperware products, it can lead to purchasing decisions. In other words, if Tupperware products have value and give a good impression (perceived quality) on the community then the level of purchasing decisions will increase. In addition, the perceived quality impression value is able to mediate the relationship between personal selling and purchase decision.

Based on the conclusion, the researcher suggest future research to delve deeper into the gaps in the current study. The gaps are such as other factors affecting perceived quality in Indonesian customers, personal selling's competitiveness against brand selling, and how purchase decision can be improved by miscellaneous factors.

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